

# McNamara Declaration

## Exhibit 156

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**From:** Brenton Cheng  
**Sent:** Friday, November 3, 2017 4:02 AM EDT  
**To:** Michael (Mek) Karpeles  
**BCC:** Brenton Cheng  
**Subject:** Re: [internetarchive/openlibrary] Inconsistent carousels (#496)

Nice.

On Nov 3, 2017, at 12:01 AM, Michael E. Karpeles <[notifications@github.com](mailto:notifications@github.com)> wrote:

██████████, I appreciate this perspective. We aspire to continuously improve as a metadata resource, both for librarians and for the average user. ██████████ and ██████████ have been doing amazing work, volunteering contributions almost every day (!) to help us achieve this mission.

Open Library also needs to remain sustainable as a project and provide value to its stakeholders -- our readers and the Internet Archive. One of the reasons we're allowed to continue development is that thousands of readers every day use us as a mechanism for discovery for finding their next book. Book borrows is one way we measure the value we give to our readers and the value we provide Internet Archive. Rather than trying to push books based on an agenda, we try really hard to choose carousels based on the anonymized analytics we receive from site use.

While a bookcover shouldn't be the only information we show to users (we have and are open to all sorts of ideas to display more information users have grown to expect), it is *by far* the number one most compelling thing which users look for, based on our analytics. And given reality has it that we are competing for eyeballs with Amazon, Goodreads (45M monthly users), Overdrive, OCLC Worldcat, and countless other websites, there's a certain degree of wisdom in listening to analytics and user feedback.

I don't say any of this to invalidate any of the feedback you're offering. As a lover of metadata, I'm doing everything I know how (given the resources we have) to help guide us towards a world of richer metadata. We've been working with Wikidata, Betterworldbooks, Onix feed providers, OPDS providers, and have even been building tools to empower our community to help with work/edition. And I'm also happy to invest my person hours, my weekends, reviewing any code contributions you want to offer to make our content more engaging, equitable, discoverable, and accessible to wider audiences.

Rather, I simply hope to communicate that on the other end of the equation, there are tens of thousands of readers on Open Library who are looking for romance novels, self-help books, kids books, and modern thrillers. And that performance and engagement are necessary criteria which determine our future. I know you aren't advocating that we ignore these things, but I think it's easy (and I only say this because I do it all the time) to view Open Library in a purist lense of being the open metadata catalog for the world, without strategizing for the elements

which help us survive and hit these milestones. Said with the absolute highest degree of love and respect <3 - mek

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